

Check my mark [INAUDIBLE]

Camera roll seven, side three for Simon Rozenkier.

OK. I still want to stay in the-- before you left. Before Magda got you out, I want to ask you again what other things you remember happening in there to you or to anybody else.

OK.

Did you know what was going on?

I knew it, but I didn't want to know it. I knew that they do something else to one and something else to the other. I knew that. But I didn't want to know. I just wanted to where I'm going to be, what's going to happen to my life, right? And I didn't want to look in his face. But I just looked around. Where am I? Is there a chance for me to go out from here or not?

Do you know who the doctor is?

Yeah, I know. I knew one doctor. I know Kramer. He was a bastard that you have ever seen. You know? He killed kids as he walked, Dr. Kramer. A terrible person. A terrible doctor. And then I know Dr. [? Hunts, ?] but I don't know his second name. They said, [INAUDIBLE] [? Hunts. ?] That's all I know. That's it.

You know, let me tell you something. They had the students who were young people with those doctors. You know why? And there are a lot of nurses. But most of them are doctors. You see, some doctors overdid. If they're Jewish doctors, you had Polish doctors, from all over. But some of them were showoffs, overdid. You know what I'm talking about, overdid? They could save somebody but they proved they're very sufficient. Right.

But some doctors I see commit suicide. I know a lot of doctors committed suicide. Because they were wearing the uniform, the stripes. And they didn't want to live. They didn't want to do what they're told to do. They don't want to period live. You know? They walked like this. Go ahead, shoot me. [LAUGHS] They wouldn't do it. But some of them, I don't know. It depends. You know listen from so many thousands of people there was good people and bad people, bad doctors and good.

But one time I watched when we were marching from the barracks-- this I gotta tell you. That's very important. They had those buses. I don't know what color, green or something. And I didn't know what happened. Then all of a sudden, they open the doors and everybody's on top of the other, dead.

Do you know what I'm talking about? Everyone is on top of the other. They've died. You know? And I just wonder what happened over there. They shot them or something. I didn't know. They put gas? I had no idea. This is unbelievable, you know? Like to crush together. That's--

And I had to live with it. I didn't know. I didn't know. Sometimes I'll walk out, I'll go out from the barrack. And I look and I'll see trains coming. Bialystok, Bialystok. Russia, Russia. I see their trains come. Or Amsterdam, you know? Francia. They don't say "France." They say Francia. You know what I'm talking about? [LAUGHS]

I see the trains come. And watch when they come down with this dress, such beautiful coats and everything. And they talk to them nice. And they show they have a ticket. [LAUGHS] This is unbelievable. This was kind of show, you know? And I say, maybe those people are Germans. They're going to live here or something. Because beyond that, they had commanders and lagerfuhrer, you know? And then all of a sudden, they take everything away and ride away to the crematorium. They-- this something that--

Did you know when they were giving you the injections in your testicles, did you know what they were doing?

No, I had no--

Did you know what was happening to you?

I didn't feel it. I know I was bleeding from my penis. And it swelled up. That's how I know. I was hard for me to bleed sometimes. I was swollen. They seen it, that I had some problems.

Were you in pain?

I don't know what pain is. [LAUGHS] I had pain all my-- since I was there, I was in pain. What is pain, you know? But I was thinking about myself and my family, if I ever going to see them. Sometimes I cry. I lay on the bunk and cry. I say ma and [? sister, ?] I want to see you. And you know how it is, you know? I says, you know, I hope you are alive and I'm coming to see you. And I cried.

When they took me out from that barrack, I told you, I don't know what's going to happen to me. To my mother, I was talking. I don't know what's going to happen to me. I don't know if I'm going to ever see you again. Because of all my friends are not coming back. And this, you know, you see tears. You cry and cry and cry. And family was dear to me. And I don't know-- I don't know if I am ever going to see them. And I didn't, none of them.

When I was in the-- oh, OK. You tell me what you want me to say. I was shipped to-- when I was shipped on a pickup truck to a place. They called it coal mine. And they called it--

Is just when you went out with Magda?

Yeah. She tried hard for me to get it. She said-- Czech and Polish is not-- words are almost, is sometimes the same. And when a truck went to [Place name] It's near Gleiwitz, I think. it was. And then I worked for a coal mine. There were British over there at coal mine. The company I worked for, the name was [INAUDIBLE] Duesseldorf. They were making pipes. Same thing as in Monowitz by IG Farben and Bayer. They're making the same thing.

But after that-- you know what I see it after that? I just kind of didn't believe it. I seen planes very high and their-- not a flame, but like a-- I could see it from the tail. It came out like a trust or something like from heaven. The cloud, cloud. Right? So it's just stripes.

And I didn't know who they are. They were passing by in the [? hundreds. ?] Very, very, very high. Very high, they were going one by one. And I'm surprised they didn't bomb that place. They were going-- so many. Each time I see them going, you know, [HUMMING]. You hear the noise, you know? Planes moving.

How long were you in the hospital, the Zoo camp? How long?

It must have been about three months. In Auschwitz-- in Birkenau, it was a long time. About two or three months. Because I came with two kids. One was named [Personal name] and one [? Meyer. ?] And one was from [Place name] and the other one was from [Place name] or Budapest, I don't know. They were my age. Probably younger, maybe, a year or two. And I got close to them, very much. And we went to [INAUDIBLE].

They came with-- I was a long time in Auschwitz because they came with Eichmann's transport. You ever heard of Eichmann transport? That transport came from Hungary. You know, and those two kids came. I don't know how they let them go. You know? They'll get with me and we went there.

If I worked in a coal mine, but sometimes I fix the bicycle, like a flat for the guy who used to take care-- used to take us to back to work. At night, they used to put chains on our feet and our hands so we cannot escape when we walk to the mine.

But what about, again, the Zoo camp is my main focus here.

Oh, go ahead.

Any other memories from that of the things that happened to you or to other children?

Well, I don't know. It's a dream. It's hard to tell, it's very hard to tell what they did over there. Because you know, it was like killing chickens. [LAUGHS] And that's why they called it a Zoo camp. Unbelievable. You know, when I see a green eye and a blue eye. See, and they measured this and that.

Oh, there were places that they don't want you to live anymore. You were too short. You know? They measure you. You know something? You wouldn't believe it what they did. They measure you to see how high you are. But not me. I would put bricks on my shoe. You know what I'm talking about?

So I would be taller, even though it was uncomfortable. I knew all the tricks what they did. Those newcomers didn't know, but I knew already what they're doing. And I was told by the nurses over there, watch out for this, watch out for this. They liked me very much, you know?

So if you-- anybody who comes out from those camps is lucky. You understand? Luck. Not because-- I've seen a rabbi sitting on a chair from a transport and they're burning the beard. And I just looked, I says, is his face going to be burned? You know, I'm talking to myself. You know, and they're laughing, Gestapo, around the chair. He's a rabbi or whatever. Now, I know. Before, I don't know rabbi or this or rabbi with the beard.

So if you go out from those kind of camps, you're a lucky man. I mean, you have a second chance to live. Because, you know-- well, second chance, yes or no. I don't know. I would expect second chance because you're not finished yet. You still wear the stripes, you know? After I fix the guy's bike, he says don't work in the coal mine. I want you to come up and work--

One second. I'm sorry. You have a little bit of-- Have to a drink.

Right.

There's a lot of nerves, I have.

I don't blame you.

[LAUGHS] You tell me what you want to know.

I want to know how you finally-- when the war was coming to an end, how were you finally were liberated?

No. So let me go on.

OK.

When they bombed the kitchen in [Place name] so we had no food to eat anymore. So we had to leave. So when they bombed, we have to leave. So in the snow in 1944-- end of '44, maybe? There was so much snow, you have no idea.

Maybe it's up to your neck over the field. That's all snow. But those, we had-- everybody got a loaf of bread. With a loaf of bread, and they gave you a fake honey. You know what fake means? Not real honey, it's unofficial. Is that what you say? OK, unofficial honey.

And we marched. We marched-- it start night and I don't know where I walked. But some of the guys did escape to the woods. But I didn't know where to go. I would not take a chance. But marching, marching in the snow. And if you could not march, then you raise your hands. And you get two bullets. And you fall down the side. And the Gestapo make sure that you're dead. Do you understand? Those who could not go on had to raise their hands. You know why?

And we marched and marched and marched. We passed Auschwitz, Gleiwitz, Auschwitz. We marched for days. And each time we go into a barn-- you know what a barn is, right? Where they have the horses there, right? And we sleep overnight because they have to take a sleep too. And the Gestapo were not youngsters. Older men.

Now I'm thinking, how stupid could we be? Let those guys march-- let those guys-- how we let them take-- we couldn't take care of them. You know, we were marching, marching. And you couldn't take care of them, because you know-- but some of them did. Many, many escaped. But let me put it this way, where do I go? I go in the woods, maybe? Maybe you find some soldiers and probably they're going to kill you. So where am I-- there's no place for me to go. We walked.

Finally, we got into Gross-Rosen. You ever heard of camp Gross-Rosen? And I was told that Mengele was there a half hour ago and he disappeared. We come in Gross-Rosen and we stayed there for a while. And then we go and march. We marched to Blechhammer. I don't know which comes first. I think Blechhammer is the end.

And we marched into Blechhammer. We marched into Blechhammer. And then nobody's there. We're liberated. Yeah. But not so soon. You know, we hear artillery fire over our heads. So my friend David says to me, you know something? Go to a place where they have potatoes. Like for the winter, they're covered up with straw. What do you call that in English? They're covered with straw, shouldn't freeze. Like the-- I don't know. They keep it for the for the winter. So they're covered up with straw.

Bin, Simon.

What?

It's a bin.

Yeah, they're covered up.

It's a storage bin.

Yeah, they kept it up. Like they keep the corn in the north over there. Yeah. And you know something? And then I go, as I go and get some potatoes and to make-- you know I have a little-- and start to cook, to make a fire. It was a lot of things over there, you could do it. You know, they have a fire ring. And I said to Dave, you get me a place to sleep.

And they fired-- look what luck it is. Unbelievable. I lost such a good guy. And they fired the incendiary bomb to the barrack. And it killed my friend. Would you believe it? It came from someplace, you know?

Finally we're marching, finally we're marching. They tell us to go out. So we go out. But listen to what they did. To save themselves, the SS, they had to-- they put us as a shield around the barracks.

Hang on one second. I'm sorry, Joan. We can hear that. We can hear that, when you're going through your purse.

I'm sorry. I'm putting it away.

We'll wait for you.

OK, done.

Thanks.

You know, to save their lives-- now I realize. Before, I didn't know. All of us had to shield the barracks so the Gestapo could escape, because they were firing artillery. And a lot of shrapnels hit my friends. And some of them died.

But one friend of mine-- you know, I liked him very much. His name was [Personal name] He developed gangrene in

his arm. And I told him, like, the only thing you can do is-- or march wherever you want to go. Or if not, go into a hay.

You know, cover yourself up in hay. And he did. He listened to me. He says, when you walk, you're going to die anyway. You know, it's swollen like this. So I threw him in the hay. And I know his first name, [Personal name] But I don't know.

Finally, they took us on a train, open flats. And we'd crawl. When I got to Buchenwald, I was, like, black. But we got-- not to Buchenwald. We got into Weimar. It's before Buchenwald. Because you couldn't go into Buchenwald because all the railroads were bombed. You know, it looked like bracelets.

We walk upstairs to Buchenwald. They have no room for us. Finally, they pick up the youngest and they put you in a young camp in the back by [? Gustav ?] over there. Way over in the back.

And finally, I was there-- I must have been there for about-- oh, I was liberated in April. April 11 in 1945. So I must have come in end of the year to Buchenwald. Got to be end of the year. Terrible snow, terrible weather.

And from there, I was sick. I had dysentery. I was on a-- they put me on a clinic over there. They gave me a little bit of those, kasha I don't know. They helped me a lot. It was not a-- Buchenwald was not-- towards the end, it was not a bad camp. And then I went, I came back.

But as time went on, and the bombing we could hear and everything, so finally, we are ordered-- all the Jews have to go forward to the gate. Only the Jews had to go to the gate. Because probably the American is coming, they're coming. Right? So I did. I went to the gate, you know? And guess who came in? Americans. [LAUGHS]

They didn't want us to see Americans. They wanted to push us-- we're supposed to go to Mauthausen. They wanted to take us as far as Austria, Mauthausen. But Mauthausen would not accept us. But it was no plot. No-- so I met some soldiers, you know, and this. I met a lot of soldiers. And then I met a man who was my friend. And they let us sleep-- you know where? --in the Gestapo barracks. You know, barrack where the Gestapo sleeps, in the barracks.

You know, and I see German doctors taking care of those who are very sick. They were told by the Americans, right? That they have to take care of it, take care of it. So when I see a man, say the doctor says I have tuberculosis. Don't touch him. And since then, I didn't say a man. I know what happened to him. Maybe in Israel. Most of them went to Israel with the Rabbi Schacter.

You ever heard of Rabbi Schacter? No? Rabbi Schacter took them all to-- I was supposed to go to Marseille. But I followed the soldiers. You know, when I got a little better, I followed the soldiers. And all the soldiers went to Heidelberg. And those-- one Jewish soldier, he's named [? Avi, ?] says that he met some girls in Wolfenbuttel or [Place name] I think Wolfenbuttel. And about 10 of them. I should take care of them.

He asked me, you ride on a bike? I says, yes. Take that motorcycle from the Germans. You know, we walk into the house in Germany. You open the closet. You see a SS hat hanging. He said, where is your man, your husband? In Russia, they killed him.

I says, you want to sell it? She says, no. You could take it. So it was not a big motorcycle. Good for me. And I was-- I commute from Heidelberg to the girls. 10 girls were there. And I used to bring them food. I see the girls once in a while. I've seen the girls once in a while. [Personal names] and this and that [Personal name]

But this sergeant who liberated me-- do you know? He married one of the inmates. Her name was Bella. My wife met her too. And I was his best man in Heidelberg. I was holding the chuppah. Yes! Holding the chuppah. He married her.

But God wasn't good to him. He worked for Grumman aircraft as an engineer. He died of cancer very young.

I have another question for you.

Yeah, keep going.

What happened to your family?

What happened to my family, I tried to ask-- I call the Red Cross. In 1947 when I came here, I was in a DP camp in Stuttgart. From Heidelberg to go to America, you have to go to Stuttgart DP camp. Which I was there with my friends, you know? And from there, I was-- Avi, the sergeant, he worked with the United Jewish Appeal, right? And he sponsored me, his name.

So when I came to America, I went to Brighton Beach [? seven. ?] His father was a barber. [LAUGHS] His father was a barber. But I didn't go to live there. I wanted to see where Avi is. So Avi was in Bethpage, Bethpage Where Grumman and them come Bethpage You know, married to the-- he was married. He was married there, but she came maybe six months later. Before me, she came. Not much. Maybe '46. Could be '47. I don't remember. And I met Jimmy and I met Bill. Nice guys from north. You know, Jimmy and Bill?

When did you come to this country?

'47, in March three my birthday.

You have to say it in a full sentence. Tell me--

I came to America in 19--

Sorry, start over.

Yeah? I came to the United States in 1947. And the ship where I came, name was Marine Marlin. I never forget. You know, it was my birthday. And I was sick from-- the water didn't do good for me, the ocean. But the captain called my name and says have some oranges. [LAUGHS] When I get back, the guy-- I have a suitcase. I have a striped suit, you know, from the camp. I didn't want to-- because, crazy ideas. Maybe I'm going to use it sometimes? I don't know.

And then nothing with me. I don't believe that. He said to me, where's your stuff? I did not speak so good English. I learned from Avi a little bit. I says, come in. You know, he's coming from Europe. [LAUGHS] You know, I'm the only guy who had just a shirt. I don't believe it.

And then this nice lady, when I came to the ship and I never-- and I don't know. She said she wants to take somebody to her home. Her name was-- oh my God. [LAUGHS] So many years ago. Her name was--

Molly Kearnes.

Kearnes yes. Nice lady.

What was her name?

Kearnes.

[? Kearnes. ?]

I have to ask him.

[LAUGHS] Her name was Kearnes. She picked me up from the transport where we came in there by the pier. And says, you come to my house. I'm going to take care of you. You know, I was-- I have pictures. I was a little. I was not that big. And she took care of me for a while, took care of me. And I stood with her.

And then my friends came with the same ship. And they moved to Flushing. And I seen them. And then my friends, my

sister's friends which were in the same camp, lived in the Bronx some place. [INAUDIBLE] parkway? Where's that? I don't even remember where it is. Lived in the Bronx. I went to see them.

I have another question.

Yeah, Have it.

I'm going to just jump ahead.

Yeah, go ahead.

When did you-- when you were married, did you expect that you would be able to have a family?

Oh, definitely.

You have to tell--

Yeah. I would-- definitely. I said, I'm going to have a big family when I married Joan, my wife. I said, I want to have a big family. Definitely. And then when-- She could not conceive. You understand? So I went to a lot of doctors. Dr. Katz. Usually on Ocean Parkway was a lot of Jewish doctors. Now they've moved away or whatever.

In [Place name] there were Jewish doctors over there. And they took a sperm test. And they say, there are a few sperms, but they're dying. They're like poisoned, whatever. You know? So then I said to my wife, listen, I don't want to hurt you. Take a sperm from some young people who go to college and this and that. And she did a few times. And I don't know what happened, why we stopped.

What's happened to our light?

Well--